

COUNTY: BERKSHIRE

SITE NAME: WINTERBOURNE CHALK PIT

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authorities: Newbury District Council, Berkshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SU448722

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 174 **1:10,000:** SU47 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1970 **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 0.04 ha 0.1 ac

Other information: Within North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Description and Reasons for Notification

The rocks seen here contain a series of phosphate-rich chalks and other features which indicate the rather abnormal pattern of sedimentation which characterised the deposition of the upper parts of the Chalk in West Berkshire. The sediments were laid down on the floor of an extensive warm sea which covered much of Europe during the late Cretaceous period of geological time, about 80 million years ago, and provide evidence of locally severe contemporary earth movements which took place in the area at that time. Since this is the only locality at which rocks of this age are known in the western part of the London Basin, the site is of great importance to geologists attempting to elucidate the geological history of this key part of the geology of southern England. The site was the source of evidence used in the production of an important research paper published in 1981.